

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 06224 301903Z
ACTION ARA-14

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INFO PANCANAL

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UNCLAS PANAMA 6224

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

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PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PN

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLLOWING FROM USIS/PANAMA DATED 30 AUG 77 SENT ACTION USINFO WASHDC
INFO

SECSTATE WASHDC REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO:

QUOTE UNCLAS

E.O. 11652: N/A

MEDIA REACTION

1-PANAMA CITY.-GEORGE MEANY'S PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE NEW
TREATY WAS HEADLINED IN THREE OF THE FOUR MORNING PAPERS AUGUST
30. MATUTINO RAN THE MISLEADING HEAD: "MAIN LABOR BODY AFL-CIO
SUPPORTS TREATY" OVER THE EFE WASHINGTON STORY.

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2-GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MATUTINO ALSO FRONT-PAGED DEFEAT OF
ANTI-TREATY RESOLUTION BY SOUTHERN GOVERNORS CONFERENCE WITH
HEAD, "DEFEAT IN SOUTHERN MEETING MOTION AGAINST TREATY," OVER
UPI SAN ANTONIO DATELINE.

3-MATUTINO AND SISTER TABLOID CRITICA FRONT-PAGED A DAVID, PANAMA

DATELINE STORY ON VICE PRESIDENT GONZALEZ TRIP THERE TO COORDINATE RECEPTION OF GENERAL TORRIJOS ON LATTER'S RETURN FROM TREATY SIGNING. GONZALEZ IS QUOTED AS SAYING IN BRIEF STORY, "AMERICANS IN THE CANAL ZONE WILL RECEIVE KIND TREATMENT WHEN THAT TERRITORY PASSES TO PANAMA...WHAT WE WANT IS NATIONAL REAFFIRMATION, NOT HUMILIATION OF FOREIGNERS."

4-CRITICA'S LEAD EDIT, "TORRIJOS' CLEAR CONCEPTS," REFERS TO CHIEF OF STATE'S AUGUST 26 INTERVIEW IN SANTIAGO, VERAGUAS. ON THE POSSIBLE DEFEAT OF THE PLEBISCITE HERE, CRITICA COMMENTS: "THE BITTER POSSIBILITY THAT THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE MIGHT REJECT THE TREATY...WAS RAISED BY A JOURNALIST. SUCH AN ABSURDITY COULD ONLY BE POSSIBLE IF OPPOSITION TO GENERAL TORRIJOS WERE CONFUSED WITH AN UNPATRIOTIC ATTITUDE. NEVERTHELESS TORRIJOS ANSWERED SERENLY: "THIS WOULD BE A LACK OF CONFIDENCE...AND THIS WOULD BE VERY HARD FOR A LEADER. IT WOULD BE LESS THAN MORAL AND SHAMEFUL FOR ME TO REMAIN AS THE LEADER WHEN A NATION HAS REJECTED ME."

5-CRITICA CONCLUDES: "BUT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE AND NOT BECAUSE OF OMAR TORRIJOS WHO IS NOT A DEITY, BUT BECAUSE A PEOPLE CANNOT THROW ITS REDEMPTION OVERBOARD IN ORDER TO BITE THE HAND THAT HAS SERVED IT IN EXCESS." (SIC)

6-CAMILO O. PEREZ, IN HIS CRITICA OP ED COLUMN, BONA FIDE, AGREES THAT THE IDEA OF THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE APPROVING THE TREATY UNCLASSIFIED

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UNDER PROTEST HAS MERIT. PEREZ ALSO REPEATS HIS CAUTIOUS STANCE. HE CONCLUDES: "ANXIETY CAN BE FELT ALL OVER. IT'S A KIND OF MYSTERIOUSNESS. THERE IS SOME OPTIMISM BUT ALSO MUCH, MUCH CAUTION. AND THIS GOVERNMENT KNOWS IT."

7-WRITING IN LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA, PAGE 2, VICTOR C. URRUTIA PREDICTS SENATE RATIFICATION OF THE NEW TREATY ONCE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LEARNS THE FACTS. REFERRING TO THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY, URRUTIA ANALOGIZES: "ONE CAN CREATE A SUMMERTIME CLIMATE INSIDE A HOUSE ARTIFICIALLY, BY BURNING FUEL, AND THIS IS WHAT REAGAN AND HIS ILK HAVE DONE. BUT WHEN CARTER AND HIS TEAM OPEN THE DOORS OF THE HOMES HEATED BY REAGAN'S PREACHING, THE ARTIFICIAL SUMMER WILL END IN A MORE OR LESS SHORT TIME. AND THIS IS WHAT I PREDICT WILL HAPPEN IN THE COMING MONTHS, NOT NECESSARILY THIS YEAR. FOR THAT REASON I FEEL THAT THE TREATY WILL BE RATIFIED." ITEM UNQUOTE JORDEN

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